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Wavin' while we wait
A driver waves to onlookers at the Minden Ice Races hosted by the Minden Kin Club on Saturday, Feb. 3 at the Minden Fairgrounds. /TIM YANO Special to the *Times*

MH looks into auto-read water, wastewater metres

by **JAMES MATTHEWS**
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Minden Hills taxpayers could face an increase in their water and wastewater rates this year.

Township council met Feb. 1 to discuss the rate supported budget, which includes Minden's water treatment and distribution, wastewater collection and treatment, and Lutterworth Pines water treatment and distribution.

The 2024 rate supported budget proposes a two per cent water rate increase and a three per cent wastewater rate increase.

It's suspected the wastewater budget may have a small surplus. If that's the case, the money will be transferred to the wastewater reserve for future capital needs.

The Minden Water System user rate will increase by seven cents to $3.48 per cubic metre. The Minden Wastewater System rate will increase by 12 cents to $4.24 per cubic metre.

The proposed rate increases will adjust the minimum billings per quarter to $142.61 for the water system and $199.45 for wastewater. That's an increase of $2.93 and $5.88 respectively.

see NEW page 3

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HHHS looks forward to the future

by **EMILY STONEHOUSE**
Times Staff

Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock MPP Laurie Scott and HHHS interim CEO Veronica Nelson smile while sharing the news at HHHS in Haliburton last July during the announcement of the CT scanner and mammography unit. /File photo

With one full month of 2024 under our belt, the goals and resolutions of the coming year have started to come into focus. This is true for the Haliburton Highlands Health Services (HHHS), with Veronica Nelson at the helm.

Nelson stepped into the role of interim CEO for HHHS in June of last year, before transitioning to the permanent position later in the year. She had assumed the heavy role shortly after the closure of the Minden emergency department (ED), but has dedicated herself to establishing the lines of communication between HHHS and the community, and trying to move forward.

"My mantra is to always practice transparent communications," she said, "and these communications need to be consistent and ongoing. We want to continue the conversation."

Upon Nelson stepping into the role, HHHS began offering community town halls, to present citizens with the opportunity to ask questions and delve into the realities of healthcare in Ontario.

What was noted repeatedly in these sessions, was that we are not alone in wading through the waters of a healthcare crisis in Ontario. "In this post-COVID recovery, there were other changes occurring in the healthcare system. Some good, some bad," she said. "Right now, there are more options for people than there were before."

Some of these options include shifts in virtual physician engagement, pharmacist-led prescriptions, and a proactive approach to healthcare. Funding and priorities from provincial directives changed during the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in staff trying to pivot in their understanding of care. Alterations were put in place as a result of changing on the fly and the degrees of uncertainty during the tumultuous time in healthcare, but have settled into something resembling stability over the years. Slowly but surely.

The community sessions will continue in the new year, said Nelson, who will kick off their Winter Engagement Sessions on Feb. 28. These sessions will feature key speakers, who will focus on the overall objective to meet and understand healthcare in the Highlands. All information on these sessions are available at www.hhhs.ca.

Nelson also noted that ED wait times official reporting will begin April 1, with all relevant data available on the ministry website shortly thereafter.

Another venue in which Nelson and her team are keeping the lines of communication open with the community, is by welcoming all to join the HHHS board of directors. The applications for the board will be posted on the HHHS website in early February, and all pertinent criteria will be built into that application. "There are limited exclusions to anyone trying to join the board," said Nelson, noting that it is a skills-based board, with a three year term.

At minimum, board members must be able to commit to at least ten hours per month, as many members are present on both the board, as well as a committee of HHHS.

While changes are being made to the overall image of HHHS to the community, Nelson and her team noted that there is still work to be done in terms of recruitment. "We're not out of the woods yet for staffing," she said. Since June of 2023, HHHS has recruited six registered nurses, five registered practical nurses, and three personal support workers (and four casual). They have also bulked up their administrative team and support staff.

"The vibe is different, it's fresher, and we make sure we do staff recognition regularly. Our staff are so deserving of recognition," Nelson said. On Feb. 2, HHHS have their official staff recognition, where they will celebrate 181 of their staff in an event to catch-up on the years between 2018 to 2022, when these timely acknowledgements took a hiatus. "I am so excited to celebrate all these people who truly deserve to be celebrated in so many ways," she said.

While Nelson and her team strive to make HHHS a destination for physician and nurse recruitment, there are continued efforts going on behind the scenes. Jennifer Burns West, the VP of clinical and community programs, is heading to job fairs to try to encourage students to get involved, and she and Nelson are also working with the county physician recruiter, Wendy Welch, to explore options outside the box to bring medical professionals to the community.

Nelson also noted that by adding a CT machine and mammography resources to HHHS, this will entice more physicians to take Haliburton County into consideration for full-time roles. "These tools will change the way we do recruitment," said Nelson. "They will really put us on the map."

Overall, the team at HHHS are optimistic about the year ahead. While they recognize that 2023 was a trying year for many in the healthcare industry, they are hopeful that the year ahead will offer some positivity for everyone.

Between offering new programming for both staff and patients at HHHS, continuing conversations with the community, and building a baseline team who genuinely wants to be there, Nelson hopes to shift mindsets around HHHS, and continue growing together. "We have to work together," she said, "we have to be a part of the community, and if you ever have any questions, please, just ask."

HHHS Foundation Capital Campaign Chair announced

CT Scan and Mammography one step closer to reality for the Highlands

Tayce Wakefield, an experienced campaign volunteer and long-time resident of the Highlands, has agreed to assume the lead volunteer role in the upcoming Haliburton Highlands Health Services Foundation (HHHSF, the Foundation) capital campaign. At the same time, the Foundation announced early results of the Believe in the Magic of Giving Holiday Campaign.

The campaign will focus on raising the funds required for the purchase and installation of a new life-saving CT scan and technologically-advanced mammography equipment to be located at the Haliburton HHHS site. Local access to this diagnostic equipment will decrease turnaround times for diagnoses, reduce the requirement for and environmental costs of patient travel, and reduce the number of land and air EMS transfers.

"We are thrilled that Tayce has agreed to take on this significant role to move the campaign forward," says David Blodgett, HHHSF Chair. "She has been part of the Highlands for 30+ years and understands the importance of high-quality health care services close to home." Supported by HHHSF staff and volunteers including the Board, Tayce will lead a team of volunteers committed to the campaign›s success.

"These technologies will make an important difference for full-time and seasonal residents. I look forward to working with volunteers and staff to expand the base of financial support across the Highlands community, raise the necessary funds, and help position HHHS for the future", said Tayce Wakefield.

Along with the announcement of the Campaign Chair came the news about the results of the Believe in the Magic of Giving Holiday Campaign that included a matching gift of up to $50,000 from Walter Ozog in honour of his wife Anu Kerstin Lellep and his parents Sophia and Martin. The Magic of Giving total as of January 10 is over $238,000.

"Diagnostic imaging is more than a piece of technology." says Veronica Nelson, President and CEO of Haliburton Highlands Health Services. Appointed to the role in early December, she has more than 30 years of experience in diagnostic imaging, was a member of the HHHS team in the past and has championed the need for modern diagnostic services in the Highlands for more than a decade. "Seeing CT and mammography come to life in the Highlands is an incredible step forward to optimize health and wellbeing in Haliburton County."

Given the aging population in the Highlands, along with the abundance of high-risk work and recreational activities in the area, having diagnostic services available close by will provide quick diagnosis of critical illnesses and injuries. The information from diagnostic scans is sent to what is called the Picture Archiving Communications System (PACS) that stores and allows specialists across Ontario to securely evaluate images and provide the diagnosis to the Highlands health care team ensuring access to the best care as quickly as possible.

"I am energized by the response I've received about the upcoming improvements in diagnostic services in the County," says HHHSF Executive Director Melanie Klodt Wong. "The early support from the County and people like Walter Ozog who understand the importance of health care close by, have set a solid pace for the early stage of our $4.3-million campaign."

The Ontario Ministry of Health approved HHHS to purchase and operate the CT Scanner and technologically-advanced Mammography in July. The County of Haliburton approved a $1-million grant to support the purchase and installation of the equipment in December 2023.

For more information about the Campaign and the HHHS Foundation, please contact Melanie Klodt Wong (mklodt-wong@hhhs.ca), 705-457-1580.

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AH awaits Dorset Rec Centre's re-opening

by JAMES MATTHEWS
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Work continues at the shuttered Dorset Recreation Centre.

Adam Thorn, the public works manager in Algonquin Highlands, provided township council with an update during its regular meeting Feb. 1.

He said there's still quite a bit of painting with drywall work and plumbing progressing.

"It's still moving forward," Thorn said.

A firm opening date for the centre remains elusive, though.

"Everything is moving forward, which is great.," he said. "We haven't had any large snags by any means that is really setting us back.

"But at this time, I don't know yet. They haven't started construction on the main floor for the bathrooms upstairs yet. There's still a lot going on there."

The facility was closed in 2022 and remediation work began to address mould and moisture issues inside the structure.

The scope of work includes only a ventilation system as opposed to a full heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system (HVAC). Optimal ventilation will prevent future mould occurrences.

Thorn said he'll go back to the contractor and ask for a general idea of a completion date.

"Just an estimate," said Mayor Liz Danielsen. "Are we talking about the middle of March or the end of March or the middle of April? I just think that people are anxious to know when it's going to open. They're very anxious about the gym."

Deputy Mayor Jennifer Dailloux, who is on the Haliburton County Library Board, said the library isn't likely to open at the same time as the recreation facilities. Much work with stocking the bookshelves and other equipment will be required.

Dailloux said council considered piggybacking the recreation centre's opening with an event like May 24 weekend or Canada Day.

"Are we still on track in thinking we might do that?" she said.

"I think we're definitely on track for wanting to do that," Danielsen said. "I'm not sure that we can. We need to know when the work is going to be done and allow some time for planning and, obviously, have a discussion about what that will entail."

Angie Bird, the township's ACO, said there's work to be done outside the recreation centre.

"I wouldn't suggest we do it first thing in the spring," she said, and added that it be tied in with the grand opening of the park in July.

New readers will lead to efficiency

from page 1

The Lutterworth Pines System billings will be adjusted to $318.48 per quarter for a $6.24 increase.

"The benefit to adopting the water and wastewater rates as quickly as we can is that gives us stability to update those rates in our system and make sure that our billing is conducted in a timely manner," said Greg Bedard, the township's finance director.

The Ontario Clean Water Agency (OCWA) has the contract to provide water and wastewater services in Minden Hills. Water and wastewater metres are currently manually read.

Improvements in that process are being considered.

That means an OCWA employee must physically attend to each outside meter at a house or other building to obtain the reading. Meter reading must sometimes be juggled between conflicting priorities, and that results in meter readings that are not consistently taken on the same day in each quarter.

Automated meter reading reduces the manual effort and improves the process. The current manual process to read meters may take upwards of two weeks. The time needed to read meters would be reduced to less than one day with automated meter reading.

And it's fairly straightforward: A radio reader is secured over the existing outdoor metre and is read by a vehicle driving by or by fixed antenna.

"That would be a service level enhancement and that it something we heard council wishes staff to explore," Bedard said.

A radio-read device and the technology for drive-by reading will cost about $120,000 to cover every house in Minden. That's a price obtained in November 2023. But that's only for equipment and not the cost to upgrade metres that are non-compliant with the radio read technology.

"It's a great efficiency initiative in terms of time spent metre-reading and allows that metre-reading to be more consistent," Bedard said.

Public Works staff have asked for $60,000 in this year's budget to begin the work toward auto metre reading. The coin would be taken from the water reserve fund.

"What we anticipate is it would be a multi-year project," he said.

Staff will begin the process of exploring labour, equipment, and communication costs that are not currently known.

Councillor Ivan Ingram asked about the lifespan of water metres.

"They've been in our system for a long time now," Ingram said.

Jeremy Manning, a senior operations manager at OCWA, said metres have about 50 years of life.

"Based on the readings on the ones that we've taken out and sent back in for confirmation that they're still reading within acceptable limits, we've received feedback from the supplier that those ones are within normal reading parameters for those metres," Manning said

County chooses its deputy warden

by JAMES MATTHEWS
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Haliburton County's deputy warden is Highlands East Mayor Dave Burton.

The two-horse race for deputy warden Jan. 24 was between Coun. Burton and Coun. Bob Carter, the mayor of Minden Hills.

Carter threw his hat in the ring in December in a bid for the warden's chair. But Liz Danielsen, the mayor of Algonquin Highlands, was returned to that post.

Carter said there are a number of issues that need ironing out following adoption of the short-term rental bylaw. In no order of importance, those issues are transportation, housing, and health care.

"These are all files that I have been up to speed on and I have been working in and want to work more on," he said. "I think those are going to be the big challenges for the county in the upcoming period and, certainly, before the end of this term."

Working as deputy warden will enable him to work more in depth on those issues, he said.

"Those are the important areas I want to work on, I want to focus on, as well as keeping out finances as controlled as possible," Carter said.

Burton said there's much to be done to finish some of the plans that have been in the works for the county for the past five years.

"I'm looking forward to getting some of that put to bed," he said.

With all the projects, all the irons in the fire, Burton said he's willing to help out in any way he can.

"I'd like us just to move forward together as a team," he said.

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THE TOWNSHIP OF MINDEN HILLS
IN SEASON, EVERY SEASON

MINDEN HILLS CULTURAL CENTRE

MINDEN HILLS Cultural Centre

The Agnes Jamieson Gallery will be closed February 6-9 as we install our next exhibit. Archie Stouffer Elementary School presents their 1st annual student exhibit with the theme of what Minden means to the artist. The exhibit will be on display in the Gallery from February 10 to March 30. All are welcome to the opening reception on February 10 from 1-3 pm. Refreshments will be served. Admission is by donation.

Family Day fun at the Minden Hills Cultural Centre on Monday, February 19 from 12 – 2 pm. Pop by for hands-on activities, check out our latest exhibits, find a treasure at the Friends of the Haliburton County Public Library Book Sale and grab a delicious bowl of chili or a hot dog donated and served by the Rotary Club of Minden. All are welcome, admission by donation.
For more information, please call 705-286-3763 or email culturalcentre@mindenhills.ca.

SNOW REMOVAL

Section 181 of the Ontario Highway Traffic Act states: No person shall deposit snow or ice on a roadway without permission in writing from the Ministry or the road authority responsible for the maintenance of the road. R.S.O. 1990, c. H.8, s. 181.

FIRE SAFETY

Fact: Cooking is the number one cause of residential fires in Ontario.
• Keep a proper-fitting pot lid near the stove when cooking. If a pot catches fire, slide the lid over the pot and turn off the stove. Do not move the pan.
• Wear tight-fitting or rolled up sleeves when using the stove. Loose, dangling clothing can easily catch fire. If your clothing catches fire, stop, drop to the ground and roll over and over to put out the fire.
• Keep combustible items such as cooking utensils, dishcloths, paper towels and potholders a safe distance from the stove.
• Keep children away from the stove. Make sure electrical cords are not dangling from countertops, where they could be pulled over by small children.
• Cool a burn by running cool water over the wound for 3 to 5 minutes. If the burn is severe, seek medical attention.
Always make sure to: stay in the kitchen and pay attention when cooking; drink responsibly when cooking, and if a fire occurs, get out immediately and call 911.

WINTER PARKING

From November 1 to April 30, 2024 overnight parking is illegal from midnight to 8:00 AM on township roadways and parking lots. Parking in the turning circle of a cul-de-sac is prohibited during all hours. Vehicles parked in areas that interferes with snow removal will be towed away and/or ticketed at the owner's expense.

VIRTUAL, IN-PERSON COUNCIL MEETINGS

Council and Closed Session meetings are currently being conducted with a hybrid model of in-person (Council Chambers) and electronic participation in accordance with the Municipal Act. Meetings begin at 9:00 AM unless otherwise noted. The scheduled upcoming meetings are:
• February 8 – Regular Council Meeting
• February 29 – Regular Council Meeting.

Members of the Public are invited to observe Council proceedings by attending in-person or via the live-stream link on the Township CivicWeb Portal at mindenhills.civicweb.net/Portal/MeetingTypeList.aspx . Visit our website for more information.

ZERO FOOD WASTE TIPS

You can take action to avoid food waste:
• Cut off any mushy imperfections on strawberries. Put the strawberries with imperfections in ice water for 20 minutes and they will come out firmer and bright. Strawberries will last longer if stored in a glass jar.
• Store potatoes with an apple to prevent sprouting.
• If you have sliced avocado, put lemon juice on the avocado to prevent browning.
For more tips on how you can take action on food waste visit Township of Minden Hills social media.

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A single Snow Bunting stops to preen while feeding along the shoreline.

Chickadees showed a marked decline in 2023./Photos by Ed Poropat

Snow Buntings steal the show

by **ED POROPAT**
Special to the Times

The 57th annual Minden Christmas Bird Count has come and gone, but to participants, it will not be soon forgotten. The event was held on Saturday, Dec. 16 in near perfect conditions. The morning brought mild temperatures, very little wind, and a dazzling, cerulean blue sky. It was a gorgeous day to simply be outside! Although clouds rolled in by the afternoon, many participants commented on the spectacular conditions. Eleven teams of 31 field counters dispersed throughout the 24 km diameter count circle and 13 feeder watchers observed their feeding stations for any bird activity. By the time dusk fell, the field teams had expended a near-record 96+ total hours of effort, with the feeder watchers providing an additional 23 hours of observations. The collected data provided a nice sampling of what was present in the area on count day.

Quiet feeders

Almost every feeder watcher in 2023 commented on the lack of birds. One long time participant even lamented that despite several hours of observation, his only visitor was a lone Eastern Gray Squirrel! But, the birds were out there, both in diversity and abundance. They just had no interest in the feeders with the generous amount of food in the forests. Over the course of the day, 48 different species were found (above the 20-year average of 45.9) and a total of 4747 individual birds (well above the 20-year average of 4287). As predicted, the nomadic winter finches were well represented, and the abundance of open water yielded a good diversity of waterfowl. In general, raptor number appeared strong also.

Our usual backyard friends such as the Black-capped Chickadee and the woodpeckers showed declines in detection in 2023. Are these reduced numbers actual or perceived? Are these backyard visitors able to find plenty of food in the woods, and thus, visit less often, or at all? A quick look through the past 10 years of data collected by this count generally supports the fact that during years of good to excellent natural seed production, chickadee numbers appear to be weak. When cone crops fail, these permanent residents flock to the feeders for easy meals. The Black-capped Chickadee (630) population showed a decrease of around 50 per cent this year, significantly down from the 20-year average of 1247 individuals. The woodpeckers, both Downy and Hairy, showed similar declines. The Downy (22) exhibited a 60 per cent decline, and Hairy (42) likewise showed a 50 per cent reduction. The nuthatches, on the other hand, showed slight increases above the average, White-breasted Nuthatch (102) and Red-breasted Nuthatch (134). The Red-breasted Nuthatches were almost certainly undercounted, given the amount of cone crop present. Blue Jay (391) numbers almost equalled the 20-year mean of 387. Other frequent feeder birds such as the Dark-eyed Junco (38) and the American Tree Sparrow (62) were present in near-regular numbers. The inconspicuous Brown Creeper (17) broke the previous high count by one.

Game birds appeared to be in lower numbers this year. 133 Wild Turkeys were counted within the circle, down substantially from the 20-year average of 162, and well below the count high of 280 birds back in 2012. Ruffed Grouse (nine) also had a somewhat poor showing, tallying below the average of 15 birds.

Strong showings

The mild early winter combined with an abundance of seeds and berries in the area created record-breaking conditions for some species. The Red Crossbill, for example, is a nomadic winter finch that follows banner cone crops around the continent. With so many cones on our pines this year, the crossbills have been abundant, and are now likely settling down to breed in the area. This species shows 12 different "types", all with different call notes and varying bill sizes adapted for extracting seeds from different cones. In the west, some specialize on Ponderosa Pine, Lodgepole Pine, or Western Hemlock. With failed cone crops in that part of the continent, many of these birds have drifted eastward, looking for food. The count tallied a total of 57 Red Crossbills, almost as many as the record high 65 found back in 1967 when the first Minden Count was held. Likely, many more were present, but they appear to have paired up for breeding and are not being very conspicuous now. Smaller finches such as the streaky Pine Siskin (344), the yellowish American Goldfinch (640), and a few pinkish Common Redpolls (44) danced among treetops, feeding on birch, alder, and some conifers. With a bumper crop of Balsam Fir cones, many Purple Finches (134) remained in the area, moving around in small loose flocks. As the winter progresses, the snow deepens, and food becomes scarcer, we may start seeing some of these birds more regularly at our feeders.

The mild weather before the count resulted in many of the larger lakes being ice-free. Thus, some waterfowl lingered in the area. Trumpeter Swans continue their population increase, with a record-breaking 19 being counted this year. A few Common Loons (three) enjoyed fishing in the extensive open water, not feeling the urge to move south just yet. A flock of Greater Scaup (14) were discovered on Mountain Lake, providing not only a record number of individuals observed on count day, but also only the third time it has ever been recorded on the Christmas Count. With creeks and rivers running clear and open, several Belted Kingfishers (4) remained in the area, equalling a record count.

More birds and rodents in our area usually means more accompanying predators looking for an easy meal. The 2023 count was a relatively strong one for raptors. Barred Owls (eight) tied a previous count high. A single adult Cooper's Hawk hunting in Minden was a nice find for one team. Red-tailed Hawks (7) were well-represented this year. An exciting observation was the discovery of two different Golden Eagles south of Minden. These rare winter birds had only been seen on four previous counts, so finding two in a single day was exceptional. Bald Eagles (seven) were also present in good numbers, enjoying the thermals created by the warming sun.

But the stars of the day on this 2023 bird count were the Snow Buntings. These arctic nesting birds are regular visitors in the county each fall. Having been recorded on nearly every count since its inception, seeing or hearing a few is hardly noteworthy. Finding a swirling flock of 500 birds, on the other hand, is simply breathtaking! Likely due to the minimal snow cover in the tilled fields, foraging has been easy for these birds, causing them to remain in the region longer than they normally might. One lucky team discovered a large flock of 450 – 500 birds feeding in a field southwest of Minden. A truly spectacular sight! In total, 718 Snow Buntings were counted, breaking the 1982 record of 711 birds.

Unusual species

No new species were added to the cumulative Minden Christmas Bird Count list in 2023 (it presently sits at an impressive 110 species). Although common during the summer months, a Common Grackle (one) near Lochlin was a nice count-day discovery for one group. Several Northern Cardinals (four) were reported, mostly near Minden. These beautiful birds are regularly observed in southern Ontario once you get off the granite Canadian Shield. Here, though, they mostly rely on feeding stations in the winter to survive, as well as good cover nearby such as thick conifers or cedar hedges. Most Ring-billed Gulls cleared out of the county when the first snows fell, but a single, lingering individual was found on count day by one team. Despite not being found on the 16th, two separate Red-bellied Woodpeckers were observed during the count week within the circle. This species is increasing its population throughout Ontario. An adult Peregrine Falcon was observed hunting pigeons in downtown Minden on the 12th, missing the count week tally by a day. This would have been only the second time it has been seen during the count period.

And that's it for another year! As always, thank you to all the participants for your dedication and efforts. Your volunteer work helps keep a "finger on the pulse" of the avian world surrounding us.

Dominion Hotel thanks you, the community

by **THOMAS SMITH**
Editor

"The hotel is the cornerstone of the town," says Shawn Chamberlain, owner and innkeeper of the Dominion Hotel, "it is the longest standing business in Minden." Since the Dominion Hotel's inception, it has operated as both a hotel and a restaurant.

The hotel was opened to serve alcohol, attracting neighbours from the nearby dry townships. Hotels were not allowed to refuse travellers during the winter at the time. Chamberlain says that sometimes during frightful blizzards, 40-60 people would be put up in the attic with straw mattresses and charged a dollar for their stay.

When asked if he would still honour that deal, Chamberlain assured me that there is plenty of space in the attic.

Not only is the Dominion Hotel the oldest building in town, it is also the oldest hotel in Ontario.

Chamberlain and his partner Elli purchased the Dominion Hotel twenty years ago. Originally, the two owned the neighbouring fine dining restaurant Grill on the Gull, but recognized a great opportunity when the Dominion Hotel became for sale.

"It's a complicated story. When the Dominion Hotel came on the market, we had a good look at it." After seeing the property, the couple knew that the Dominion Hotel was a great real estate opportunity and the perfect chance to flex their restaurateuring chops.

After a few years went by, the couple fell further in love with the building and decided to renovate it to bring the hotel's accommodation to a modern standard and improve the look of the property.

When asked about his favourite thing of being owner and Innkeeper of the Dominion hotel, Chamberlain said that the "best part is being able to spend time with people. It is a pleasure to talk with folks and catch up on their lives." Covering the costs of their bills and payroll of our staff is also crucially important, says Chamberlain with a laugh.

Chamberlain would like to give "a special thank you to the community, our customers who have supported us throughout the years. They've been there throughout the pandemic, through limited seating, and floods. They have been with us through every calamity. I really appreciate these folks."

Several restaurants and businesses in Minden are seasonal and close during the winter. On January 12th, The Rockcliffe in Moore's Falls decided unexpectedly to close their restaurant operations for the winter. Their hotel accommodations remain open and they say that they are excited to open in the summer.

"We are open every day, all throughout the year. We stay here to try to give back to the community, when someone wants to take their sweetheart out, or someone wants to go out for a hearty meal. The community has looked after us and we want to look after our community too"

There are no current plans on changing their menu. However, there are always little tweaks and they consistently bring new specials in. The menu offers a plethora of options, from a chilli covered hotdog longer than my forearm, to grilled falafel wraps.

"They're all like children to me, to a certain extent. It's hard to pick a favourite. I don't think there is one in particular," says Chamberlain, "...but I long for burgers at the Dominion."

"It's awful," says Chamberlain sadly, "I have to police myself or else I'd be eating our delicious french fries every day."

Chamberlain says that working at the Dominion is not without the temptations, but he is certainly grateful that the menu offers options such as the black bean soup (which is both keto and vegetarian friendly). Another favourite of his is the caesar salad with grilled chicken, a wonderful option for those looking to reduce calories but still have a deliciously wonderful night out.

For their current winter season, Chamberlain says that business is "not too good. It will take a while for the season to see how it picks up, but the trails have been groomed." Warmer weather and rain have made many lakes in the area unsafe to walk on or snowmobile yet, a deterrent for retreating snow lovers.

Comfortability is the Dominion Hotel's number one priority for their guests. Our community and guests from all over the world know that the Dominion Hotel is a comfortable and cozy space that offers great food and an opportunity to gather, chat, listen to music, and have a place to call their home away from home.

> "We are open every day, all throughout the year. We stay here to try to give back to the community, when someone wants to take their sweetheart out, or someone wants to go out for a hearty meal. The community has looked after us and we want to look after our community too"
>
> — SHAWN CHAMBERLAIN, DOMINION HOTEL

Chamberlain says that the Dominion Hotel has big plans for their 160th anniversary this year. Special food, drinks and events have been discussed, but nothing permanent has been set yet. Chamberlain is excited to announce that he is already in the booking and planning stages for musical guests this season. He hopes that their events will start up more frequently around the beginning of April.

The Dominion Hotel is also excited to announce that they will be continuing their tradition of their Valentine's Day dinner. The Dominion Hotel is going to have two special events for anyone looking to spend time with a loved one. One dinner at 5 and another at 7 will feature a special menu, special drinks and live entertainment by Trina West alongside candlelight.

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InOtherWords

Columns and Letters to the Editor

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Cats don't belong outside

YOUR CAT is an invasive species.

An invasive species to our ecosystem that is killing 100 million birds in Canada each year.

"My cat loves going outside!" you may say. Perfect! There are a plethora of harness options for you and your feline best friend to go and explore the outside world.

There is no reason for your cat to be let outside. Period.

I have seen too many cats that have been struck on the side of the road in Haliburton County to simply stand by and not say anything.

Especially after this week's highlight of the winter bird count.

An estimated 100 million birds are killed in Canada each year by cats.

THOMAS SMITH
Editor

I can empathize with those whose let their cats outside. My cat, Leyla, ran outside constantly and would whine at windows and doors at all hours of the day in any season. As soon as the door was opened, she would slip through our legs like a greased hairy turkey.

I've spent many hot summer days on my hands and knees searching under bushes, in trees, and under decks for her. While she never went far, I worried about her and other animal's safety greatly. (I once had to scare off a possum she was slinging insults at through the patio door)

A catio was the perfect solution for my cat. Using the living room window, some chicken wire, and scrap wood from my father's garage, I created an outdoor space in which my cat could experience the outside world during all seasons.

After installing the catio, my cat has not attempted a getaway since.

In Haliburton County, there are large apex predators such as bears, wolves, and coyotes that see your cat as a tasty snack. There are plethora of other critters out there that pose a threat to your feline best friend including dogs, birds of prey, and even other cats, be they feral or domestic.

If your cat is declawed for whatever reason (although unnecessary declawing was made illegal in 2020), letting them outside could be a death sentence for them without their natural abilities to defend themselves, climb, and survive outdoors.

"But Mr. Fluffy always comes back every night." Yes, Mr Fluffy does. But do you see everywhere that he went all day?

Some people say that their cat would never hurt a fly, or that they have a bell on their collar to warn birds. Your cat has natural hunting instincts and freaking daggers in their freaking hands they will use to terrorize the native species in the local ecosystems.

Even if your cat is well fed, it will kill birds and small mammals instinctively.

According to Nature Canada, cats have heavily contributed to the extinction of 30+ bird species in Canada.

In addition to the impact on songbirds in Ontario, ring necked pheasants, one of the most popularly hunted bird species, are one of the most affected bird species of cat predation.

While not as eye-catching as birds, small mammals, amphibians, reptiles, and insects are also subjected to the unfair pressures of domesticated cats in their ecosystems.

Cats don't belong outside unless supervised on a lead, or enclosed in a catio.

Fly season

As I write this, I am surrounded by flies. This will probably come as no surprise to anyone who knows me.

As you might have surmised, they are pesky little things. To be clear, I am not referring to flying insects. Rather, I'm talking about the fishing flies I am tying.

You see, winter for many fly anglers is the time to tie flies. I suspect many of you might say so what? You might even think this seems harmless enough.

Unfortunately, when it comes to fly tying, I am a bit of an addict. I need to tie at least a dozen flies every day to get my fix. At first, I told myself that I was doing this to replenish my fly boxes for the open waters of spring. But, as Jenn recently pointed out, how many fly boxes can one person carry? In case you were wondering, the answer is several dozen less than I have already filled. But that is only because good porters are now hard to find.

STEVE GALEA
Beyond 35

Sometimes I have to wonder if it is time to give it a rest.

This is the one of the two great dilemmas every fly tyer faces. The other dilemma is how to respond when someone discovers you tie flies and then says, "Wow! How you get them to hold still?"

The answer to the second dilemma is to roll your eyes.

The answer to the first dilemma is far more complex though. I mean you tie flies for a reason, right? At first you tie them for trout. Then you tie them for bass, then you tie them for pike and muskie. Then you tie them for saltwater fish, even though you have never fished in a saltwater environment in your life.

That, by the way, is the first clue that things are getting out of hand. The next clue is that you start going down that rabbit hole even further. Before long you are tying very purpose-specific flies. For instance, I know a guy who claims to tie a great fly that is particularly effective when used for five-finned trout in moderate flowing water. If it is half as effective as my caddis fly imitation for trout with astigmatism in their right eye, he's probably onto something too. That fly is so deadly that I had to tie one for trout with astigmatism in their left eye – even though that is a relatively rare circumstance to run into on the rivers I fish.

None of these things are, in themselves, a problem, however. The issue really begins when you start telling people about these flies – particularly, at social gatherings when people are talking about less important achievements like getting their PhD or discovering the cure for some rare tropical disease.

Of course, the problem is not yours. It's theirs.

I mean if they don't want to hear about your recipe for a size 22 midge pattern that simulates a rare aquatic nymph that has ADHD and only comes out on odd-numbered days of the week, just prior to the quarter moon of any month that begins with the letter M, that's on them. It's their loss. Completely

Well, maybe not completely. At last count, I've got fly three boxes full of them.

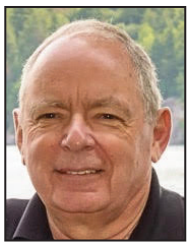
InOtherWords

Columns and Letters to the Editor

The day the music died

I WAS A good old boy "drinkin' whiskey and rye" last Saturday, Feb. 3. That was the day for remembering the 65th anniversary of "the day the music died," as musician Don McLean wrote in his enigmatic 1971 song American Pie.

On Feb. 3, 1959 a private airplane crashed in an Iowa corn field, killing rock and roll stars Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens and J. P. (The Big Bopper) Richardson. The four-seat plane, flown by a young, inexperienced pilot, took off in darkness and encountered fast changing winter conditions.



JIM POLING SR.
From Shaman's Rock

The entertainers were on a Winter Dancy Party tour, travelling by bus. Holly is said to have been frustrated by buses breaking down in freezing weather and chartered the airplane to get to the next tour stop.

Waylon Jennings had a seat on the plane but gave it up to Richardson who was stricken with the flu. Valens, who had never flown before, got a seat by winning a coin toss with Tommy Allsup, the group's guitarist.

Holly, Valens, and Richardson were young performers of the rocking new music style that exploded in the 1950s. Rock and roll songs accounted for 43 per cent of all record sales at the close of the 1950s.

Their deaths traumatized music fans, one of whom was McLean, a 13-year-old paperboy and future songwriter and singer. He learned of the deaths when he opened his bundle of New Rochelle, New York Standard-Star newspapers to deliver and saw the front page story of the plane crash..

Thoughts of that day never left him and a decade later he wrote them into the song he titled American Pie.

"But February made me shiver with every paper I'd deliver . . . ," he sang in the first verse. "I can't remember if I cried when I read about his widowed bride (Holly's young wife), but something touched me deep inside the day the music died."

The song, however, was not just about the deaths of the rock and roll stars. It was a reflection of America in the 1960s and how the country was changed by events like the Vietnam War, and the assassinations of the Kennedys and Martin King Jr.

McLean called his song a complicated parable, open to many interpretations. But there was no confusion about what he saw in the sixties as America's loss of innocence.

He seldom has answered questions about what some of the cryptic lyrics mean.

"People ask me if I left the lyrics open to ambiguity," he once said in an interview. "Of course I did. I wanted to make a whole series of complex statements. The lyrics had to do with the state of society at the time."

For more than 50 years the enigmatic lyrics have generated debate over their real meaning. There are fan websites dedicated to decoding the song.

McLean's lyrics, however, clearly tell of a generation disillusioned by how America changed culturally and politically after the 1950s. McLean is said to have been obsessed with what he considered the "death of America" – the loss of many things he believed in while growing up.

Half a century later America is fraught with even more changes, and disillusionments, than McLean saw.

It is a country struggling with rampant violence, a drug abuse epidemic, declining health care, racism and illegal immigration. It is a nation that is losing respect and its influence in the world.

Its most serious problem appears to be the inability of its two political parties to work together to find solutions. There now is a red America and a blue America that have different views on the country's history, its economics and even its Constitution and how it should be applied.

American Pie has been called one of the most culturally significant songs of the last century. Despite its length – more than eight minutes long – it is a catchy tune often played at parties.

Most importantly, it is long form musical story telling. And, telling our stories in whatever form is how we get to know ourselves and find ways to make ourselves and ou societies better.

Minden Memories

Born in Lutterworth in 1898, Arthur Boldt was enlisted in the 109th Battalion in December 1915. He served under the 20th Battalion in France in October 1916 but suffered from pneumonia and pleurisy. He was medically discharged in April, 1918. /Photo submitted by the Minden Hills Cultural Centre

Scotch Line School correction

To the Editor,

I would like to add to the information concerning the picture in the *Times* about Minden Memories. As stated, church services held in schools usually occurred when no actual church was available. I remember my grandfather, Stan Kellett talking about the family, on Sundays, walking to the Red School House on the Kinmount Road (where John Hulbig lived). This would have been in the late 1890's.

This was not the situation with the Scotch Line School. It was always a Satellite Church connected to St. Paul's Anglican Church in Minden. Services were held there until the mid-forties. I do not know when services actually begun there but I was baptized at the school in October, 1936. Sunday School continued until at least 1957.

This particular picture was taken in the summer of 1942. On the left is Sarah Hewitt and on the right is Albert Hewitt, my maternal grandparents. My mother, Gladys (Hewitt) Kellett) is sitting between them. In the background over my mother's left shoulder, would be me. At that time, I would be 7 years old. I think the gentleman behind my grandfather is Mr. Dudman. The minister was the Rev. McLaren who was at St. Paul's from 1942 to 1944.

Gareth Kellett
Minden

Where were our local representatives?

To the Editor,

On Saturday, Jan. 27 we had the good fortune to host a sold out conference put on by Aging Together as Community. The conference, at the Pinestone Resort, was titled Inspiring Creativity and Empowering Change and over 165 people attended. It was informative, inspiring and thoroughly engaging. There were a number of excellent speakers on various topics and from various generations, from teens to more elderly folks as well. The presenters were both local and from other parts of Ontario and Canada.

The biggest disappointment for us was the lack of attendance from local politicians. Councillors from all four municipalities and the County were invited. Only one Councillor responded and registered and one other Councillor arrived without registering. The purpose of registering, of course, is to keep track of numbers to meet fire regulations and to plan the number of lunches needed. All other Councillors, to my knowledge, were mute. I should note that our MP, MPP and the leader of the provincial NDP, Marit Stiles, and the Leader of the Green Party, Mike Schreiner, all responded.

This would have been an amazing opportunity for our local Councillors to engage with the community on these important issues. This truly makes us wonder, and worry, about the level of community engagement from our representatives.

Thanks to all those that made this fantastic event possible.

Greg J. Roe, On behalf of the Aging Together as Community Steering Committee

HCPL's Book of the Week

India Allwood, an aspiring actor turned Broadway star and TV superhero, faces a media frenzy after publicly criticizing her own adoption-themed movie for perpetuating clichéd tragedy. As a real-life adoptive mom, she aims to redefine her family's narrative beyond pain and regret. Soon she's at the center of a media storm, battling accusations from the press and the paparazzi, from protesters on the right and advocates on the left. Emphasizing that family isn't solely defined by blood or love, India navigates the complexities of familial bonds, challenging societal norms and highlighting the intricate nature of what truly constitutes a family.

Family Family by Laurie Frankel is available to borrow from the Haliburton County Public Library.

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Seniors Chair Exercises
When: Thursdays, at 1 p.m.
Where: St. George's Anglican Church, 617 Mountain Street
Safe and gentle exercises for seniors to help with balance, strength and flexibility. Free to join.

Cribbage and Euchre
When: Tuesdays at 2 p.m.
Where: St. George's Anglican Church, 617 Mountain St.
Please join us Tuesdays for cribbage and Euchre at St. George's Anglican Church. With funding from the Government of Ontario. Please contact lynnhiggsthompson@haliburtonanglican.ca for more information.

Super Cash Calendar Draws
When: Second Monday of the month, 6:30 p.m. January until October.
Where: Haliburton Legion
Three tickets pulled per night. First ticket winner receives $100, second ticket $200, and third ticket $500. Winners will be posted every month on www.haliburtonlions.com. Public is welcome to attend the draws at the Lions meetings.

Weekly Meat Rolls
When: Every Saturday, 3 p.m.
Where: Coboconk Legion, Hwy 48 & 35
Join us for our weekly meat draw at the Coboconk Legion. 5 spins for $10. The first 4 rounds are for highest and lowest score with 2 winners per round. The last round is for a prepare-it-yourself dinner for two. Additional spins for this round are available for $2 each. Call 705-454-8127 or email info@coboconklegion.ca for more information.

Nutrition for Seniors
When: Wednesday Feb. 7, 1:30 p.m.
Where: St. George's Anglican Church, 617 Mountain Street
Please join us to learn about nutrition for seniors with Nicki Dollo, dietician from HHHS. Topics include cooking for one, dealing with the high cost of food, and nutrition needs for seniors. This session is free to attend.

Winter Signatures - Wildlife Tracks and Signs
When: Saturday, Feb. 10, 10 a.m. - noon
Where: Barnum Creek Nature Reserve, 118 Gould Crossing Rd
Join Rick Whitteker, Haliburton Highlands Land Trust Partners in Conservation Coordinator, outdoor guide, educator and nature writer, for an engaging snowshoe hike. Release your inner detective and explore the tracks and signs of winter wildlife movement, feeding and survival on the beautiful trails of Barnum Creek. Admission is free, but donations are welcome! Pre-registration is required at www.haliburtonlandtrust.ca or by calling 705-457-3700. In the case of inclement weather, the event will be held on Sunday February 11.

Shrove Tuesday Dinner
When: Tuesday Feb. 13, 5 - 6:30 p.m.
Where: St. Paul's Anglican Church, 19 Invergordon Ave., Minden
Come join us for a Shrove Tuesday dinner of pancakes and sausages, desserts, coffee and tea. Admission by donation.

Say cheese! Welcoming a new dental service to the community

by **EMILY STONEHOUSE**
Times Staff

For many, oral health isn't a priority. Often, folks see the need for regular dental checkups as a minor inconvenience, to simply check for cavities or to keep your smile bright.

But in reality, oral health is linked to a series of health concerns. As the gateway to your body, the health of your teeth and mouth can be linked to respiratory diseases, cardiovascular concerns, diabetes, and even cancer.

That is why the Kinmount District Health Services Foundation (KDHSF) was elated to announce they have officially opened up their Smile Studio, run by registered dental hygienist, Mya Musselman. "Our services include dental cleanings, fluoride and desensitization treatments, sealants, whitening, oral health assessments and oral hygiene education," she stated in a public press release. "We follow a fee guide that's lower than a traditional dental office to help make dental care more affordable to those in need."

The KDHSF has been working diligently to recruit a variety of medical professionals to the Kinmount and District Health Centre, which services folks from all over Haliburton County and the City of Kawartha Lakes, but largely draws its patient base from Minden. Dr. Lesslie Ponraja arrived in Kinmount from England early last year, and currently has a roster of 1700 patients.

With this in mind, the KDHSF is actively looking to recruit more physicians, but are also acutely aware that the centre has the opportunity to offer a holistic approach to healthcare. "We hope that by offering some of these other services, we can supplement a visit to the doctor," said Susan Forrester, the communications committee lead for the KDHSF. "Prevention is what we have to practice during this international healthcare crisis."

Some of the other services available at the centre are physiotherapy, access to Life Labs for patients, foot care, a full pharmacy, and now, dental hygiene; all run out of the same site in the heart of Kinmount.

The Smile Studio is open Mondays and Tuesdays, from 9 A.M. until 4 P.M., and new clients are welcome. The room was previously vacant, but the team from the KDHSF, as well as the owner of the Smile Studio, Mya Musselman, have worked diligently to create a space that's friendly, warm, and inviting. "There is new plumbing, new flooring, new cupboards, and even a cozy electric fireplace," shared Forrester. "It's just so welcoming and lovely."

She noted that by renovating the space for the Smile Studio, it leaves more room upstairs for additional physicians to join their team; a concept that the Foundation currently seems optimistic about.

And while the search continues to expand their physician team, Forrester and the members of the KDHSF are thrilled to offer additional services for their patients. "The more we started looking into it, we felt it was very valuable to offer oral health services to the community," she said. "There are so many reasons to maintain your oral health, other than just confidence and a bright smile. It's so much more than just getting teeth cleaned."

Information can be found on the Smile Studio, and the other services available at the Kinmount and District Health Centre, by visiting www.kdhc.ca.

Those Other movies
MOVIE NIGHTS
Those Other movies

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The Times
MINDEN ONTARIO

Instagrammable: social media and body image

IN FEBRUARY 2023, researchers from three Ontario universities and the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario published a study showing that teens and young adults who decreased their social media use by 50% showed improvement in how they felt about their weight and overall appearance within a three-week period.

In this randomized control trial, 220 participants aged 17-25 years were selected from an introductory psychology course at a Canadian university if they were already regular social media users and exhibiting symptoms of anxiety or depression. Using screen time reports, participants were randomly selected to reduce their social media use to 1 hour per day. At the end of the study, participants who had reduced their social media use reported improvements in body image.

ERIN KERNOHAN-BERNING
Humans and Technology

Social media is often blamed for body image issues among people of all ages, particularly teens and young adults. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Facebook and Snapchat are full of celebrities promoting unrealistic beauty standards and feature digital filters that can sculpt and airbrush any selfie into someone unrecognizable with just a tap. There are wellness and beauty influencers that spread health misinformation in order to sell supplements and diet products. An entire genre of videos referred to as "grocery store walkers" features influencers walking down the aisles of popular stores like Costco fearmongering about very common ingredients found in safe and affordable foods.

Unrealistic beauty standards and body image issues pre-date the internet and social media. Take for instance the romanticization of tuberculosis. Dr. Carolyn Day, author of Consumptive Chic: A History of Beauty, Fashion, and Disease, has described how thinness, a pale complexion, and the rosy flush of fever became a popular look in the 19th century. Cosmetics were marketed to healthy women, some containing dangerous ingredients such as belladonna and arsenic, to emulate the appearance of dying from a very horrible disease.

Most readers, when thinking back to the late 20th century, can probably recall at least one arbitrary beauty ideal that brought with it some loss of confidence. The Twiggy-esque figure of the 1960s, the rise of Weight Watchers and other similar fad diet programs, the heroin chic look of the 1990s, celebrity beach body issues of tabloids lining the grocery store checkout line, just to name a few. As a society well before social media we were inundated with messaging that our bodies are not good enough unless they look a certain way.

This is not to say that social media has nothing to do with fostering poor body image – but blaming social media alone misses both the social pressures around beauty standards and how social media itself can potentially combat the problem. A study from the University of Surrey, in England, exposed 207 young men and women to images of idealized body types or body types of varying sizes, shapes and features. They found that those exposed to images of idealized body types had more feelings of negative body image, while those who were exposed to different varying body types had more feelings of positive body image.

In 2022, a video made the rounds on social media of Magic Mike leading man Channing Tatum being interviewed on the Kelly Clarkson Show. When a photo of his ultra-lean physique from the movie was shown on the big screen behind him, Tatum said that obtaining that body ideal was not healthy for him and that he hesitated to go through that process again. The video generated discussion among viewers about how the images we are exposed to greatly skew what we think is realistic and normal for a body to look like.

Author of The Body Issue, Nealie Tan Ngo, says in the AMA Journal of Ethics "…poor body image is more sinister than just not feeling happy with the way one looks. […] physical bodies are social bodies; beauty is linked to our perceptions of health, wealth, power, and overall success…" As such, Western beauty standards disproportionately harm black, indigenous, and women of colour, 2SLGBTQIA+ people, disabled people, middle-aged and senior women, and people in larger bodies, by slotting humans into those hierarchies based on appearance.

The idea that there is no perfect body, and that all bodies are good bodies, is central to the body positivity movement. Body positivity attempts to foster positive body image regardless of what beauty standard of the day society is feeding us. Creators like actress Jameela Jamil and body positivity advocate Taryn Brumfitt are just two of many who make it their mission to increase acceptance for all body types. Promoting and engaging with this kind of content on social media can help us understand that our bodies have value beyond the often unrealistic beauty standards we are fed in our media – social or otherwise.

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Highlands Summer Festival

2024 Auditions Continue

The Highlands Summer Festival is holding auditions for the following 2024 productions:

- **The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee (a musical)**
- **The Miracle Worker**
- **The Birds & the Bees**

Saturday, February 10 from 10 a.m.
& Sunday, February 11 from 12:30 p.m.

at **St. George's Anglican Church**
617 Mountain Street, Haliburton

Character descriptions and other important details, including how to register, can be found in the audition package, linked from the HSF home page at **www.highlandssummerfestival.on.ca**

Those interested can contact Melissa Stephens at 705 455-2366 or melistep@gmail.com

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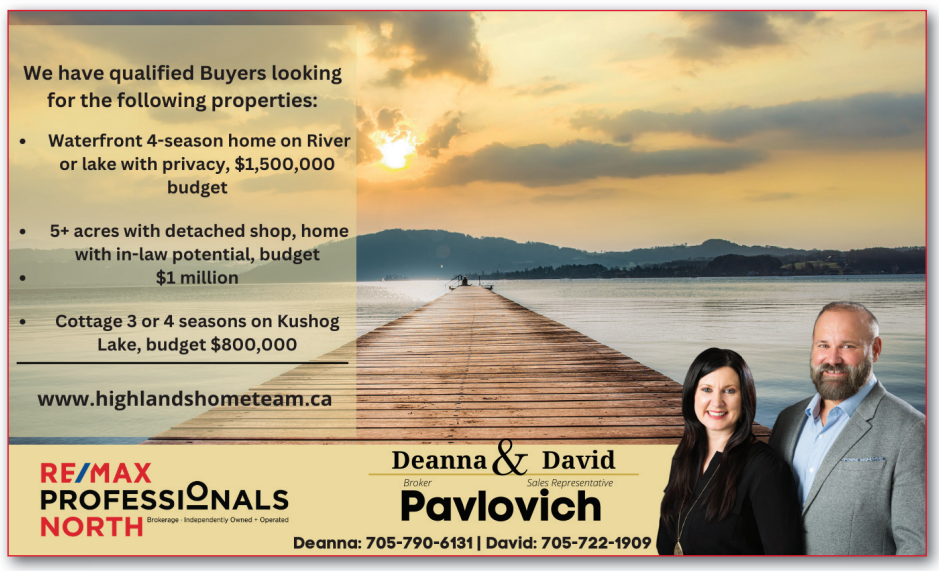
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Ctrl-ART-Del's caberet showcases love in all forms

by **THOMAS SMITH**
Editor

There are thespians amongst us in Haliburton County. Thespians of all ages and skills have joined to work with Ctrl-ART-Del, a new theatre company that utilizes local talent in all forms of the theatrical industry including actors, stage management, and directing, lighting, sound design, and set construction.

In an interview exclusive to the *Times*, Amy Leis and Tim Nicholson were excited to share their big plans for their upcoming production of *One Night Only: A Valentine's Caberet* that will be on February 16th.

This show will feature eight different one-act plays including, but not limited to, *She Came in Through the Bathroom Window*, *Slow Songs Make Me Puke*, *The Barely Wives Club*, *La Mouche*, and *F*cking Cupcakes*.

Bring your loved one to see a selection of shows featuring topics such as discovering love for the first time, the reunion of former lovers, shenanigans at a French restaurant, a fresh take on *Romeo and Juliet*, and even a trip down to the underworld.

There are 26 actors in the cast for the upcoming *One Night Only: A Valentine's Caberet*. Ctrl-ART-Del's goal is to provide opportunities for young people and local thespians from throughout the area to become immersed in the theatrical process. The company welcomes all to audition for their productions, reach out to become involved, or submit written work.

Rehearsal of *La Mouche* by Stephen Bittrich. From left, Alexander Kocot as Jacques, Jordan Kovacs as Pierre, Jessica McCready-DeBruin as the Customer, Valerie Zagorska as Sylvie. /Photos submitted

"I love working with teens," says Leis, "they work so hard."

"They are just like sponges, they want to be there. They want to do it. It is such a pleasure at the directors table," says Nicholson, "and then they go 'oh wow, this worked!" and then they take it and they make it their own. It's wonderful to watch."

Ctrl-ART-Del was formed in 2022 and had their company's debut with Cherubs in 2023. Nicholson and Leis met 10 years ago while they were both acting in a production of *I Hate Hamlet*.

The pair have been close friends ever since. Besides Nicholson, the other founding members are between the ages of 25-35.

"And I'm 38," says Nicholson with a laugh, "I don't want the kids to know how old I am!"

"When I retired a bunch of years ago, I discovered that I had nobody to pass on my skills to and everything that I had taught myself and I was taught in the 30, or 40 years of making sawdust was going to be lost with me cause there was nobody to teach it to," recounts Nicholson, "I was desperately motivated not to have that happen."

"There are a lot of skills that I have honed over the years and I don't want them to have pass with me. We formed Ctrl-ART-Del with the full intent of it being a theatre company for younger people," says Nicholson, "people that aren't my age."

Nicholson plans to be heavily involved for the first five years of the theater company's life, then entrust the company entirely to others, passing along everything he has learned and ensure his legacy.

"In 5 to 6, or 7 years, they can put me out to pasture," pleads Nicholson, "you've done your work old man, you can go away."

"It is incredibly important to us that young people locally are able to be on stage, not just in meaningful acting roles," explains Leis "but in production roles and have them be properly taught the skills that are needed." Many young people have taken up apprentice type roles within the company, fostering our next generation of thespians.

The company hopes to provide contemporary productions that will be more appealing to a younger audience.

In addition to utilizing local talent, the entirety of the rehearsals of *One Night Only: A Valentine's Caberet* have taken place at the Lion's Hall in Minden.

"They have been terrific," says Nichols, "and so helpful."

The company says that they are grateful for places such as the Minden Lions Halls and the Haliburton Legion with renting spaces for rehearsals and prodcutions.

In addition to the one-act plays, there will be improv performances throughout the evening showcasing young performers. For some, this will be their stage premier.

Actors of all ages from the community will be appearing in the production.

"It will be a fun night, something for everybody," says Leis excitedly, "it will be a great opportunity to support young theatre, especially young local people."

Tickets to *One Night Only: A Valentine's Caberet* can be purchased through their website. Proceeds from the cabaret showcase will go towards their future productions including *Mustard* by Kat Sandler which will be May 2-4 at the Performing Arts Pavilion and *The Wolves*, which will be having a production run August 15-17 at the Haliburton Legion.

Rehearsal of *The Barely Wives Club* by Sarah Segal-Lazer. From left, Hannah Klose as Juliet, Amy Leis as Eurydice, Andrew Case as Hades.

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Level: Intermediate

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Answers on page 17

Stayin' alive

Haliburton 1129 Army Cadets showed off thier survival skill at Hike Haliburton this past weekend. /TIM YANO Special to the *Times*

Oh deer!

A curious deer visited hikers and cadets at Hike Haliburton this past weekend. /TIM YANO Special to the *Times*

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Special Council Meetings
2024 BUDGET DELIBERATIONS

TAKE NOTICE that Council will conduct its 2024 budget deliberations during Special Meetings commencing at 9:00 a.m. on the following dates:

- **Wednesday, February 21, 2024**
- **Thursday, February 22, 2024**

The meetings will be held in the Council Chambers located at 1123 North Shore Road, Algonquin Highlands. Members of the Public may also observe Council proceedings by joining a live-stream link. The live-stream link can be found on the meeting Agenda at https://algonquinhighlands.civicweb.net/portal/

Dated this 7th day of February, 2024.

Dawn Newhook, Municipal Clerk
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A fresh start for Yours Outdoors

by EMILY STONEHOUSE
Times Staff

Sometimes a new year is the perfect time for a fresh start.

That's what Marena Wigmore, the experience manager for Yours Outdoors and Haliburton Forest, thought when she decided to launch a brand new website for the well-known adventure company Yours Outdoors.

"We didn't want to change the brand, didn't want to change the experiences, we just wanted a refresh," said Wigmore.

The brand and company were developed by Barrie Martin in 2006, and what started as a few smaller custom adventures quickly blossomed into well over 100 experiences across the county.

With everything from glass blowing to canoeing to igloo building, the company worked diligently to not only develop core Haliburton County experiences, but to also celebrate the guide, leaders, and unique local personalities that made each program tick.

Yours Outdoors joined forces with Haliburton Forest in 2020, and managed to wade through the murky pandemic years by pivoting with their existing experiences, and offering new ones that fell in line with the encouraged practices and protocols of the time.

By 2023, Martin was ready to hang up his managers hat from Yours Outdoors, and the reigns were passed to Marena Wigmore; who had dabbled in multiple positions at Haliburton Forest, and knew the ins and outs of tourism fluently.

As the dust from the transition settled over the summer months, Wigmore dedicated herself to keeping the brand of Yours Outdoors alive, while adding a splash of colourful change to the concept.

"We got feedback on the website from both local and provincial stakeholders, and we wanted to make it a little simpler and easier to find what you're looking for," Wigmore said. "The truth is, most people don't want to do more than two clicks on any site when they're looking for something, so we wanted to make that easier for our guests."

When designing the site, Wigmore pulled from the original elements of the brand - the colouring, the fonts, the photos - to compliment the structure of the new site; in a means of honouring the legacy of the old site, while adding a new look.

Wigmore hopes that by launching the refreshed site, the brand of Yours Outdoors will be reintroduced into the local stakeholder world. "I really want to continue connecting with folks, and letting them know that we have these resources in Haliburton County," she said. "There's so much happening across the county, and I want this site to be the one stop people make to find these experiences."

Since the launch at the beginning of the year, Wigmore has noticed a jump in traffic to the site already. She is eager to jump into the winter season; particularly with experiences like ice climbing and ice fishing; both adventures which are hosted right out at Haliburton Forest.

To visit the new site, visit www.yoursoutdoors.ca.

David Newland to be next speaker for Telling our Stories

"In Search of Lost Trees" is a folk song cycle, created and performed by singer-songwriter and storyteller David Newland. In the summer of 2023, David and his 11-year-old son travelled to Northern Ontario, looking for trees he had planted as a tree-planter in the early 1990s. On Wednesday, Feb. 14, the Speakers Series is thrilled to present David and the tale of the journey as it unfolds in stories, songs, and images, asking "what it means to live in this time of tremendous change?" David Newland is a writer, musician and scholar and he travels widely from coast to coast to coast "making Canada better known to Canadians and the world."

The Speakers Series happens on the second Wednesday of each month from 7 – 9 p.m. at the Haliburton Highlands Outdoor Association Fish Hatchery. Admission is $15/person payable (cash) at the door.

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650 OBITUARIES

In Loving Memory of
Ruth Louise Maude Perkins (nee Dodd)

Passed away peacefully at Extendicare St. Catharines, formerly of Minden, Ontario on Saturday February 3, 2024 at the age of 96.

Beloved wife of the late Bilton(Bill)Perkins. Predeceased by a sister Jean Duggan (Bill) and brothers Jim (Bea), Clifford (Nell) and Lloyd (Eileen). Will be greatly missed by her nieces and nephews Donna (the late Tom), Bob (Marg), Brian (Carol), Bill (Daisy), Dave (Lynn), Rita, George (Lynne), Ron (late JoAnne), Sharon (Mike), Victor (Mary), Marilyn (Stewart), Peter (Kathy), Angela and many great nieces and nephews.

Sincere thanks to the Haliburton Gains Clinic for their help and support while Ruth was in her home. Special thanks to the staff of Extendicare St Catharines for their love and compassionate care given to Ruth during her stay.

As per Ruth's wishes cremation has taken place. A memorial service will take place at a later date.

Donations can be made to the Alzheimer Society or a charity of your choice and can be arranged through the Gordon A. Monk Funeral Home Ltd., P.O. Box 427, Minden, Ontario K0M 2K0.

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In Loving Memory of

Sherman Cruikshanks

Peacefully passed away at the Lakeridge Health Ajax Pickering Hospital on Friday, January 26, 2024 at the age of 81.

Beloved husband of Betty-Ann; and was predeceased by his wife lla (nee Harrison). Loving father of Tammy and Angela Cruikshanks. Sherman is survived by his sister Gladys (Chris) Norris. Predeceased by his parents Raymond and Maymie Cruikshanks and siblings Laverne (Eileen), Irene, Royce (Elke), Pearl, Irwin, Jimmy, Thelma (Gord), Carol (Richard) and Frankie.

Lovingly remembered by many sisters and brothers in-law: Cec, Ivan, Thelma, Eleanor and Jeanette and will be greatly missed by many nieces, nephews and friends. Sherman's great sense of humor and generous nature will be fondly remembered by all.

A memorial service and interment was held on Monday, February 5th at Mount Lawn Funeral Home & Cemetery in Oshawa.

In Loving Memory of

Carol Bradimore (nee Cruikshanks)

It is with great sadness that the family of Carol Bradimore (nee Cruikshanks) shares her passing, in her 86th year at the Haliburton Hospital on the 25th of January, 2024.

Beloved wife of the late Richard Bradimore. Predeceased by her parents Raymond and Maymie Cruikshanks. Loving mother of Cara (Peer) and Kelly (Mark). Proud grandmother of Jesse (Emma) and Erin (Riley). Cherished sister of Gladys (Chris). Predeceased by siblings Laverne (Eileen), Irene, Royce (Elke), Pearl, Irwin, Jimmy, Thelma (Gord), Sherman and Frankie.

Lovingly remembered by many sisters and brothers in-law: Cec, Ivan, Thelma, Eleanor, Betty Ann, Jeanette and Leonard (Linda) and will be greatly missed by many nieces, nephews and friends.

Carol was generous and kind to everyone she met and readily put the needs of others before her own. She cherished all the gatherings and special events with family and friends. She loved visits with everyone who stopped by her home where the coffee and tea pot were always on for a welcomed chat.

A memorial service was held Saturday, February 3rd at Thornton Funeral Centre, Oshawa. Internment will be held in the Spring at St. Stephen's Anglican Church Cemetery, Algonquin Highlands (Haliburton County).

SUDOKU SOLUTION

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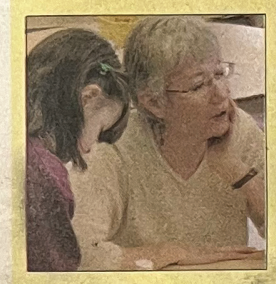


Parlez-vous francais?

Senior Kindergarten students can now enroll in French Immersion... *Page 3*

Meet to skate

Annual showcase of skating talent is Minden's version of the Olympics... *Page 15*

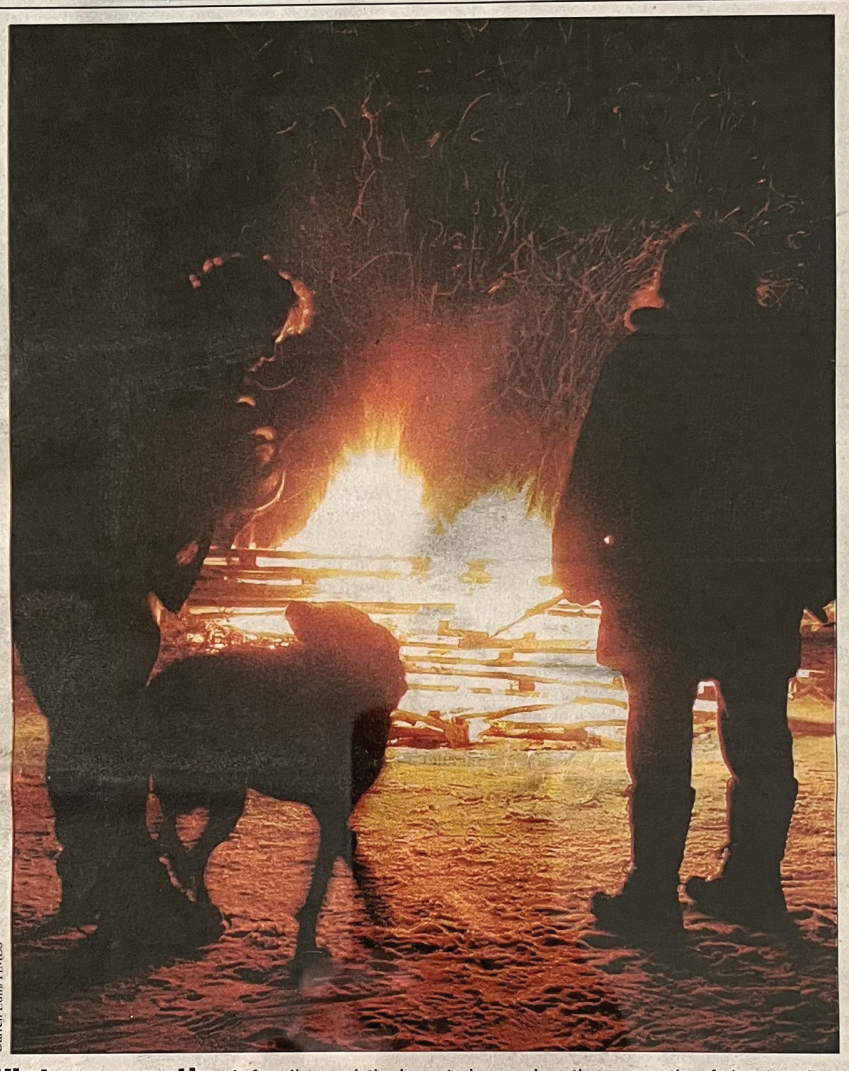
Notable quotes:

"As a parent it is my responsibility to put my kids in a situation that will be helpful to them so for me (French Immersion) is more a question of why I wouldn't do it?"
Michelle Bromley, page 3

Commentary

We could use a lot more Walter Gretzky types

Editorial, page 9



Darren Lum/TIMES

Winter warmth: A family and their pet dog enjoy the warmth of the bonfire during Minden's annual winterfest at the Minden Fairgrounds on Saturday night. Hundreds came out to skate, toboggan and savour the chili and hotdogs.

Minden Hills calls for spill reporting protocol

by ALLISON TAYLOR
Times staff

A letter from Minden Hills has spurred Algonquin Highlands to check its protocol in case of sewage spills in the area.

Late last month, Minden Hills sent the letter to all four municipalities in the county, the district health unit and the Ministry of the Environment.

The letter was in response to December's sewage spill into Lake Kashagawigamog. Minden Hills council wanted to make sure each of the aforementioned parties had either a clause in its protocol or a plan of action to contact each other when such spills occur.

Algonquin Highlands wasn't sure how to reply, or even if it should.

"We don't know if we are bing requested to respond," Reeve Eleanor Harrison said at last Thursday's Algonquin Highlands council meeting. "The letter is quite ambiguous."

The reeve and other members of council weren't certain if their township had protocol in place for such an accident.

The only protocol in place is environmental, said Gerald Bain, clerk-administrator.

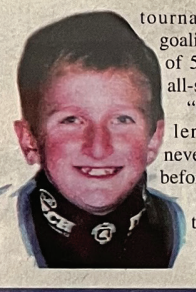
"We report to the MOE, that's our protocol," said Councillor Tom Gardner.

Harrison requested that Bain look at what protocol other

see ALGONQUIN *page 2*

Minden goalie meets Walter Gretzky as special perk of making all-star team

by JERRY GROZELLE
Times staff



Alex Monk-Cray, a member of the Central Ontario Wolves Major Novice hockey team, went to Cambridge for a Triple-A tournament recently expecting some tough competition. What he wasn't expecting was an honour that only a select few players received.

Alex was chosen to play in an all-star game made up of players selected from teams attending the tournament. He was one of six goalies chosen from among a total of 56 to play on one of the two all-star teams.

"It was very tough and challenging," Alex said. "I have never played in an all-star game before. It was outstanding."

Even though he was thrilled to be part of this spe-

see GRETZKY *page 2*

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